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A Good Man's Blunder

By CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL

And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord. And the people did yet corruptly. II Chronicles 27:2.

HERE is an ancient story that is exceedingly modern. The hero of the story is Jotham, one time king in Jerusalem. He was doubtless a bit in a class to himself in that distant day. But he would find himself a part of a great multitude were he living now. It is evident that the author has a genuine admiration for Jotham. As we read his all too brief biography we are not surprised. He had certain sterling and worthful qualities that demand admiration in every age.

I.

First, he was a man of fine native gifts. He was a king by right of birth; but he was far more, he was king by right of ability. He had qualities of leadership and of intellect that fitted him for his high office. He was no crowned nonentity. He was no sceptered incompetent. He had royal gifts to match his royal position.

Second, not only was he a man of ability, but he was also energetic. He was willing to work. I have known men of fine gifts to neutralize their usefulness by a half-hearted exercise of their powers. But this was not the case with Jotham. He believed that he had not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. He refused to be a parasite. He was an earnest and active servant of his people. He was a keen and courageous warrior, a wise and constructive statesman.

Third, not only was he an able and energetic worker, deeply concerned about the material interests of his people; not only did he build fortresses for their protection and cities in which they were to live, but he was concerned for their spiritual welfare. He was wise enough to realize something of the supreme importance of the spiritual. He was also convinced that their spiritual values were sustained and forwarded by the church. Therefore he regarded the church, not as a

liability, but as an asset. So regarding it, he neither opposed nor ignored it, but contributed to its support. The author tells us that he had builded one of its gates. He donated what would today be the equivalent of a memorial window or a pipe organ.

And finally, best of all, Jotham was a man of fine character. His good deeds were but the natural expression of a good life. The author tells that he ordered his life before the Lord his God. That is, he was possessed of a sense of God. He lived as ever in his Great Taskmaster's eye. He affirms further that so living, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. This does not mean, of course, that Jotham was an absolutely perfect man. It does mean that the main bent of his life was toward goodness. He was an able, honest and God-fearing man.

II.

But having said all these complimentary things, the author has one adverse criticism. He has one fault to find. At least he counts it as a fault. Of course we have to confess that such conduct is not so regarded by vast multitudes in our day. Some look upon it as a positive virtue. They regard it as a mark of intelligence and broadmindedness. To refer to it, therefore, as a fault would provoke a smile in many circles, if not loud and scornful laughter.

What was wrong with Jotham? It was not that though outwardly clean, he was corrupt in his private life. It was not that he was a grafter, using his high office for the feathering of his own nest. He was a good man, remember, constantly ordering his life before the Lord his God. He was genuinely religious. Nor was he at fault in that his religion made him narrow-minded and intolerant toward others. He did not contend so earnestly for the faith that he consigned all who differed from him to the bottomless pit. His one fault was this—"he entered not into the temple of the Lord."

How trifling! How like "much ado about nothing" such criticism sounds to our modern ears! How narrow-minded and silly to condemn this able and zealous servant of the people merely because he does not take time to attend the services of the church! This seems doubly so when we face the fact that there were doubtless multitudes of people in Jerusalem who never missed a service at the Temple, who would have looked like moral and spiritual dwarfs if they had stood beside this public-spirited and patriotic king. But in spite of all these considerations this old-fashioned author cannot give Jotham his wholehearted approval. With a bit of a sob in his throat he writes this one criticism: "He entered not into the Temple of the Lord."

III.

Why, I wonder, did Jotham refuse to attend church?

Had you talked this question over with this excellent king, there are certain reasons, popular enough in our day, that I am sure he would not have given. For instance, he would never have accounted for his absence on the grounds that there were so many hypocrites in the church. He was far too honest to have given such a sham reason. Those who give that reason are never quite sincere. They are always a bit hypocritical them-

selves. Nor would he have excused himself on the ground that the preacher was always begging for money, or forever talking about hell. He was not so miserly as to feel that being reminded of his obligation to give partook somewhat of the pangs of hell. Then, I am quite sure that Jotham would not have told you that he could worship God on the golf course quite as well as in the Temple. Least of all would he have had to confess that he was staying away from church because he was unwilling to be challenged with responsibilities that he did not have the gallantry and consecration to meet. He was far too fine a man to have remained away for any of these reasons.

CHILDREN AND THE CHURCH

What, then, I repeat, were his reasons?

One reason, I dare say, for Jotham's absence was that he had never formed the habit of church attendance in his boyhood. Those who attend our services today are, as a rule, those who formed a habit in their young and tender years. In saying this, I am not forgetting the man who tells us that the reason he does not go to church is because he was forced to go when he was a boy. I have met this gentleman. He has told me of his strict upbringing, of what a terrible bore Sunday used to be, of how a mere whistle from his lips on that awful day used to cause him to have to memorize whole chapters of the Bible. But when we asked him to quote one of those numberless chapters, the best he can ever do is "Jesus wept." Often he has even forgotten that, notwithstanding the fact that we remember best what we learn in childhood. There are doubtless those with whom certain pious parents made great mistakes. But having confessed this, I am convinced that for every one man who never attends church today because he was compelled to go as a boy, there are ten thousand who do not attend because they did not form the habit in childhood.

IGNORING THE CHURCH

The second reason for Jotham's absence was that he felt no especial need of church attendance. He was young and successful. He had not yet barked his shins against life's grim realities. Then, his hands were full to overflowing with big and worthwhile tasks. He was busy organizing and leading armies, in building cities and forts, in the shaping of the destiny of a nation. "Doing good," he would have told you frankly, "is my religion. Why should I turn aside from these big enterprises to go to church and hear some preacher who possibly does not possess one-half of my ability?" And surely there are multitudes that are in hearty agreement with him today. Some of them are excellent people. The majority of our writers of fiction would lead us to believe that they are about the only excellent people. All the really worthwhile men and women that we meet on their pages are the non-churchgoers. Those who attend church are usually narrow-minded and selfish, bending all their efforts to escape from a needy world where they are doing nothing, into a heaven where they can do still less.

Of course we who belong to the church cannot fully agree. While confessing that many excellent people ig-

nore the church, we dare affirm that the supreme spiritual giants of the centuries have not done so. Michael Faraday, the great English chemist and physicist, looms large as he reads a learned paper before the leading scientists of London. We are impressed when we hear no less a personage than the Prince of Wales make a motion to give him a vote of thanks. But we are more impressed still when we discover that the great scientist is not present to receive his vote of thanks. He has slipped out to attend a prayer meeting in his own church—a prayer meeting that was so small and insignificant that there were seldom as many as twenty present. Jesus himself was an exceedingly busy man. His hands were

ministers and churches in general—this notwithstanding the fact that it was a minister of the church, Stanley Jones, who led her into her transforming experience.

The cause of Jotham's prejudice is not hard to find. His father was a devoutly religious man. He was a man, also, who loved power. One day, swollen with pride, he dared to take upon himself the office of priest. The officiating priest withstood and rebuked him. Uz-ziah became exceedingly angry. While his face was red with rage, the mark of leprosy became clearly visible upon his forehead. He was compelled to leave the Temple and to spend the remainder of his life in retirement. He never attended church after that. And Jotham never forgot that horrible experience. He knew, of course, that it was not the priest who gave his father the leprosy, nor was it the church. Still he had nursed a prejudice against the church and its ministers ever since.

REPUDIATING RELIGION

There are many like that today. Sometimes their prejudice is born of sheer ignorance. The church is a faulty institution, always has been, because it is made up of faulty folks. It is certainly a long way from being above criticism. But it is unfortunate that the criticism that one reads in modern magazines is generally from twenty-five to fifty years behind the times. This is the case because, as a rule, these critics have little or no first-hand knowledge of the matters of which they write. They are blissfully unaware of what the modern church is standing for, and what it is undertaking to do. Therefore, too often their criticism is born of prejudice that is the outgrowth of ignorance.

At other times such prejudice is based upon a more solid foundation. Some have been disappointed in a particular church. They have found its membership and ministry too lacking in passion for individual and social righteousness. Possibly, they may have even suffered wrong at the hands of some member or some official of the church. A young woman told me such a story not long ago. She had been greatly wronged, and the villain was a minister. She had a perfect right to regard this particular minister as a scoundrel. But without discrimination she had come, on his account, to discredit all ministers in all churches. Worse still, she had repudiated religion altogether. That was, of course, at once unfair and unreasonable. But in spite of its unreasonableness she, as Jotham, had allowed herself to become a victim of her own prejudice.

THINKING THE MATTER THROUGH

But perhaps the supreme reason why this public-spirited king never went to church was because he did not take time to sit down and think the matter through. Had he done so he would have realized how inconsistent it was for him to undertake to build up the church with one hand while he was tearing it down with the other. He would have realized the foolishness of giving to the church while at the same time he acted toward it in a fashion that, if followed by his fellows, would have resulted in its absolute destruction. Then too, had he thought, I am sure that this good man would not have judged the services of the church solely with reference



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full of great deeds. "He went about doing good," but he was not too busy to attend church. "He went up into the synagogue on the Sabbath, as his custom was." The fact, therefore, that Jotham's life was so full that he felt no need of the church does not prove that no such need existed.

PREJUDICE AGAINST THE CHURCH

The third reason why Jotham refused to attend church was that he was prejudiced. I am not sure that this young king would have acknowledged this. I am not sure that he was aware of it himself. But he was a bit prejudiced none the less. This, I say, in spite of the fact that he was a good man. That was a good man, an Israelite without guile, who asked the question: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But he had a prejudice in spite of his goodness. Those of you who have read "I Follow the Road," will doubtless acknowledge that its author is an intelligent and cultivated woman. She also has a vital religious experience. But in spite of this, she is still genuinely prejudiced against

to their helpfulness to himself personally. He would have taken into consideration their helpfulness to others, his weaker brethren. He would have remembered that the only glimpse that some of his people got of God came through the services of the church, and he would have supported the church by his presence for their sakes. But failing to think, he failed to attend.

IV.

What was the outcome of his blunder?

One would expect to read that he had exact poetic justice meted out to him; that he ceased to be a good man and died a moral and spiritual bankrupt. That has been true of many who have followed his example. But such was not the case with Jotham. He remained a good and upright man to the end of the day. His failure to attend church did not work his own destruction. Neither did it work the destruction of the church. By his failure to attend, he no doubt weakened the church. It would have been more effective if he had been there. The church needs every man, but no single man is essential. Jotham, by neglecting the church, neither destroyed the church nor himself.

What, then, was the outcome?

The author puts it in a single sentence: "The people did yet corruptly." There were many who admired and honored this able king. They were eager to be like him, but they knew little of his secret prayer life. They did not possess his faith. They did not have his stamina. The good they saw in him, they attributed to himself alone. His religion got no credit. Therefore, when they sought to be like him, they joined him only in ignoring the church. Thus, while he made the harbor, they became shipwrecked. The tragedy of Jotham's life, therefore, was not so much in the positive harm that he did, but rather in the positive good that he failed to do. He did not fight the church, but he refused to give it his active support and to help lead it in any aggressive battle for righteousness. For this reason, he left many leading mean and corrupt lives that might have been living nobly and unselfishly if he had only been faithful to the church of his fathers.

TOWARD A NEW DAY

Now, the story of Jotham is far more up to date in this hour than the day it was written. One cannot but think wistfully of many fine and right-thinking people outside the church whose ideals are largely our own who could help us so much if they would. But they stand aloof. One cannot but think more wistfully still of the many Jothams inside the church, men and women who are well-wishers, who contribute of their means, but who seldom or never attend. Thus, they "damn with faint praise, and without sneering teach the rest to sneer." If only those of us who are within the church, who believe in its ideals and objectives, would give ourselves conscientiously and aggressively to the achieving of those objectives, we could really make the church the salt of the earth and light of the world, and civilization would move into a new day. But so long as we give anything less than ourselves, we may count on it that the record for us will be that of Jotham: "The people did yet corruptly."

The Forgotten Man

BY FORNEY HUTCHINSON

Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken. He said, is it not so, if peace and truth shall be in my days? II Kings 20:19.

HZEKIAH lived too long. A message came from God through Isaiah to him saying: "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." He protested, insisted on an extension of time, and was granted fifteen years. This extension was his undoing. Up to that time he had been known as the "good King Hezekiah." After his recovery visitors came up from Babylon, presumably to congratulate him, but really to spy out his kingdom. They investigated, with his cooperation, all of his treasures, and went back to prepare an army to lead against Israel. Following the visit of the spies Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah for his folly, announced that as a result his city would be sacked, his treasures looted, and his unborn children led away into Babylonish captivity. He assured him, however, that he would be allowed to continue his reign throughout the remainder of his days. Hezekiah blithely replied: "Good is the word of the Lord, is it not so, if peace and truth shall be in my days?" The direful calamities Isaiah had revealed seemed to give him no concern. They were too far away. His interest lay merely in concluding his own reign in peace and contentment!

We have been hearing much in these days about the "forgotten man." Who is he? Not the soldier of the American Legion who has not yet been able to procure his bonus, not the unemployed man who is being carried at least temporarily by the government, not the farmer who has been called upon to fight droughts and dust-storms, nor even the taxpayer of our generation, upon whose shoulders all but unbearable burdens are being laid. The man Hezekiah forgot and that we are forgetting is the *unborn* man, who will share the fate of the generation that shall come after us. The prevailing attitude seems to be that if we can get by to the end of our days, those who follow us may fend for themselves. It is a case of being "out of sight, out of mind."

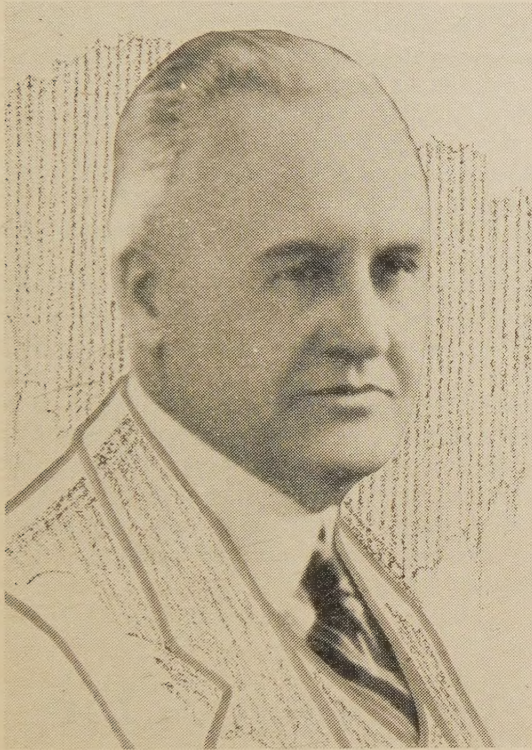
I believe this attitude is evident in the nation. Hezekiah was a king and should have been concerned for the future of his kingdom. Uncle Sam is considerate of all his nephews who press their claims upon him, but his unborn nephew he is prone to forget. I should like, if possible, for us to sit where he will sit and view the situation from his standpoint.

I.

First of all, we are destroying his assets, squandering his material wealth. His natural resources are being wasted. Theodore Roosevelt, during his administration, called a conference of all the governors of the states to consider this very matter. They discussed the soil which was being impoverished by erosion, swept away by winds and floods; also the forests which were rapidly being denuded. The waste of mineral deposits came in for large consideration. It was estimated that of the

natural gas that had been recovered, fifty per cent had been wasted; that only one barrel of oil out of every ten recovered had been used. The conference was a great success, but nothing definite was done. The cruel waste has gone merrily on.

Furthermore, we are debilitating the manhood of his generation. The personnel of the leadership which we are passing on to him will of necessity be greatly weakened; this, primarily, because of the great world war. Ten millions of the finest young men of all the warring nations lie sleeping, who otherwise might be making their contribution to the building of our civilization. Not only in quantity, but also in quality, this personality will be impoverished. The strongest and most



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virile of our young manhood went forth to war, leaving the less vigorous to be the fathers of the new generation. Furthermore, because of the monetary cost of the war, training cannot be as efficient as it otherwise would have been. Directly and indirectly, the war cost the nation an unthinkable amount of money. Necessarily this waste of wealth has produced a shortage of funds for schools and other manhood and womanhood producing agencies.

At the same time we are increasing his *liabilities*. We are hanging about his helpless neck a millstone of debt and taxation that promises to drown him in a sea of hopeless bankruptcy. These debts are of all kinds—national, state, corporation and personal. The deficit in national expenses has increased more than seven billions within the last three years. As a nation, our last three years have cost as much as our first one hundred and twenty-four. In 1912 the nation had an income from all sources of thirty-three billions, on which a tax of two billions was paid. In 1933 the income was fifty-

six billions, and the taxes shot up to twelve billions. It would take the total income of the nation for all purposes five years to pay the national debt. We owe more today than the property of the nation would bring under the hammer. We need one more amendment to the constitution—an amendment that looks toward the protection of the unborn whom we are taxing without representation.

Along with this burden of debt, we are passing down to him an army of dependents. The last estimate I saw was twenty-one millions on relief in the United States today. Much of this burden will become permanent. When we become pauperized in spirit, we pass it on to our children. With the national resources depleted, and the burden of taxation multiplied in our day, how will the soup lines and the bread lines be maintained in his day?

In addition to all this, we are passing to him some intangible liabilities that deserve consideration. With our ever increasing army and navy program, the largest peace-time military budget in history, our disconcerting maneuvers in the Pacific, our exclusion acts in congress, we are creating for him international ill will rather than good will. With our three millions of youths for whom there are no schools or jobs, with our army of unemployed adults, and with our depression at best but partially relieved, the state of the forgotten man—the unborn—is not to be envied. We are passing to him a world that is dangerously near to moral and economic bankruptcy.

II.

I should like to consider this forgotten man, in the second place, from the standpoint of the church. When David wanted to build a temple to the Lord, he was denied that privilege. He had been a man of war, which means he had exhausted all available resources. He was instructed to make preparation by accumulating materials and pass the task of construction on to Solomon. The church in our day would reverse that order. We build the structure, get the publicity, have the "grand opening," and pass the debt on to posterity. We say: "Let them pay for it, they are going to use it," forgetting that there will be plenty to pay for in their generation as there has been in ours, and that the inspiration for raising money rapidly subsides after the structure has been occupied. As a result of this policy, the church will be wrestling with gigantic building debts for at least another generation. Speaking for most churches, we are also passing to our successors an impoverished, if not exhausted, missionary program. In ten years the force on the fields has been reduced fully fifty per cent, and the debts of the various mission boards have been greatly increased.

Along with these financial obligations, the church is passing to the new generation a spiritual morale that is noticeably shattered. Among the churches, debt repudiation is not unknown in our day. Once the church was recognized by business concerns as a fine moral risk. I fear that in the future our would-be creditors will demand adequate collateral before making their loans.

In our day the divorce record has gone beyond anything ever known in the past, and all embarrassment on

that account is practically gone. We have made divorce respectable by recognizing it in many of the leading families of the nation.

Moral disintegration is obvious in our record breaking crime wave and in the reversal of our position on prohibition. Spiritual decline is evident to the discerning on every hand. The family altar is demolished, the church services are neglected, the Sabbath day is desecrated, evangelism is emasculated, religious enthusiasm has evaporated. We are running today largely on momentum. We draw our illustrations from the religious heroes of the past. We celebrate centennials and sesqui-centennials. In the Methodist churches we feature John Wesley's experience. We grow eloquent when we tell how *he* "felt his heart strangely warmed." The supreme need of the church of our day is a first-hand, up-to-date experience of God in Christ. No other kind is vital.

III.

Once more, and finally, I should like us to consider this forgotten man from the individual and personal point of view. A western university I know expects its graduates to sign the following covenant: "For all the oil that has been poured into the lamp of my life, I desire to return a glorious flame." Ours is a rich inheritance, personally, ecclesiastically, nationally. These rich treasures have come down to us through great cost and as a result of unselfish consideration on the part of former generations.

Every generation is a "bridge generation." Civilization is a relay race. As one generation comes to the last lap of the race it passes the torch to the next generation.

To you the torch we fling;
The challenge yet is heard,
Bequest of fullest sacrifice,
A life-demanding word.
Yet this thought with it comes,
A question tinged with doubt:
Shall we the torch to others pass
Whose light we've let go out?

What is to be our personal attitude? The text describes Hezekiah's. His source of comfort seems far-fetched. Indeed, it is the essence of selfishness. Louis XIV put it: "After us, the deluge." Nero said: "When I am dead, let earth be mixed with fire." A premillennialist minister said of one of his faith who had died that he was glad to leave the earth and be with the Lord, thereby escaping the calamities that were rapidly approaching, forgetting that he was leaving a frail wife alone to face a cold and cruel world in her efforts to make a living for their helpless children. As I was discussing certain deplorable conditions that obtain in our day with a physician friend of mine, he said: "Well, it will probably last as long as we do, why should we worry?" This attitude constitutes a real temptation. I have felt it, as I dare say many of you have. But it is cowardly and unworthy of real men and women. In our personal lives we dare not forget our sons and successors. At whatever cost the blood stream must be kept pure. Women who aspire to motherhood must deny themselves the use of cigarettes, which physicians generally agree is unwholesome for the unborn. Bishop Charles

B. Galloway once said that the test of greatness was to see another succeed where you failed, and rejoice in it. A greater test would be to make provision for one's successor to succeed where he failed and be glad to do it!

As I think of this forgotten man, I seem to visualize him. He is standing far down the years, his face is flushed with anger, his eyes flame with resentment, his tongue is tipped with fury. As a representative of his generation he speaks to me as a member of mine. Something like this he seems to say: "You have wasted my natural resources, you have debilitated my personality, you have bound on my back a burden of debt and taxation too grievous to be borne, you have passed on to me an army of pauperized dependents, you have secularized the church, you have diluted the gospel, you have emasculated the Christian evangel, you have polluted my blood stream, you have saturated my system with alcohol and nicotine. I hate you, I curse you!" He looks strangely familiar. Lo! He is my grandson.

I plead for an unselfish attitude, not only from the standpoint of nations, but also from the standpoint of generations. We talk much of interracial and international relations. Let us consider also inter-generational relations.

At Ponca City, Oklahoma, the home of E. W. Marland, the present governor of the state, there is a wonderful monument to the Pioneer Woman, made possible through his munificence. The monument is done in bronze and represents a strong woman facing bravely the great undeveloped west. Her bonnet is pushed back from her forehead, her stride is long, her gaze is fixed. At her side, holding her by the hand, walks her son. They are going on together! So we, as generations, should cooperate toward the consummation of an ideal civilization.

The Smell of Fire

BY UMPHREY LEE

And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was any hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Daniel 3:27.

IF you seek a miracle, consider the last clause of this verse: "nor the smell of fire had passed on them." The three Hebrew children had not only passed through the flames, but there was no smell of it on their garments. And herein is a parable for our times. Like their forefathers, many of our day have passed through "fiery trials"; but not many have come out without the smoke of it upon them.

This, indeed, is one of the deepest sorrows of sorrow, one of the greatest dangers of danger, that, having passed through one carries forever after some unmistakable evidence of the evil days which have been. Sometimes men cherish such signs of their past trials. It is a part of the humiliating history of too many "heroes" that they go about not only willing but concerned that

their fellows should detect about them the smell of fire. Most of us must admit that we, too, are like this. If we have, by some blessed mercy, walked manfully through the furnace, coming forth unscathed, or nearly so, we insist that all men remember our trials. And we are not above reminding the forgetful. "Look here!" we say, "do you notice the odor of flame in these garments? Well, once upon a time. . . ." Like the cook on the "Narcissus," in Conrad's story, we weary men by calling attention to our good deed, until they detest the heroism which they once admired.

THE LUXURY OF LAMENTATION

There is also the danger that those who have passed through the fiery furnace will succumb to the luxury of lamentation: there is no sorrow, they say, like my sorrow. Already there are signs that some of our people are settling down to enjoy political and economic ill health. They have ceased to resist evil in high places; they are content to deplore. Christianity is, it is true, always more prone to tears than to laughter; for Christians cannot forget that there is a cross very close to every city wall. But tears are sometimes the signs of nothing more than sentimentality. "Go to," say the sentimentalists, "let us tell tales of our troubles, in order that we may weep together." The early Methodists had a song which I hope was not sung too frequently:

Thou wretched man of sorrow
Whose eyes all day o'erflow,
Indulge thy grief, and borrow
The night for further woe;
In ceaseless lamentation
Thy solemn moments spend,
And groan thy expectation
That pain with life shall end.

'Till then in fixt despair
Of all relief I live,
My utmost burthen bear,
And now retire to grieve,
To taste my only pleasure,
In secret sighs complain,
Augment my mournful treasure
And aggravate my pain.

We shall have paid dearly indeed if America should be content to wallow in its sorrow, teaching its children that this is a cruel world in which man is heard of God for his much whining.

If one escapes self-pity and the fogs of religious melancholy which so frequently follow hard times, there is something else to be avoided by those who would not carry from the furnace too much smell of the fire. There is always a possibility that our courage may be crippled and our thinking warped. And this is precisely what we have to fear today. We have hoped too much, but we are in danger now of hoping too little.

In no way would I minimize the evils of our time. We do truly need a more "realistic theology" in so far as our thinking has been corrupted by the shallowness of professional optimists, by the falsetto tones of those who cried "Peace! Peace!" when there was no peace. But we may identify "realism" with bad news. Unquestionably there is an "agony of Christianity," but this is not all of the story. The other day I read a sermon

preached last year by one of the men who has most bravely withstood the encroachments of the Hitler government upon the German church. Quite rightly he emphasized the tragic sense of life and the vocation of the church to bear the cross. But one detects also an understandable and forgivable but nevertheless dangerous tendency to a belief that there is nothing in life but hopeless struggle. It is easy for one who thinks upon Galilee and the green fields and the little children to forget the cross; but it is also easy for one who thinks of the cross to forget Galilee—and even the joy of the resurrection. We who walk through valleys dark as the shadow of death ought not to deny that he has also led us and our fathers beside still waters and has made us to lie down in green pastures: and we should teach our children so.

Recently, in the Hibbert Journal, a writer called attention to a well-known French book, called "The Treason of the Intellectuals." The author of this book claims that the thinkers and writers who formerly demanded righteousness, not only of individuals but of the state, have capitulated. Now the intellectuals grant that the state must be governed by different laws; while the individual may be honest and truthful and merciful, the state cannot. And the ones who thus speak are not only subservient tools of tyrants but also spokesmen of the church. There is no use in striving, say such writers, for we can only walk through the furnace which the state will continue to heat, perhaps seven times hotter than before. The church must accept as inevitable the law of force by which the "world" lives. Against it can be brought only our witness and our hope that eventually this wicked world will be destroyed and that, in some far-off divine event, the saints will come into their own. Against the hopeless "now" we can only murmur our hopes of an indefinite "then."

THE SPIRIT OF DEFEATISM

Not so spake the prophets and fathers of old. They demanded that "justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." They demanded a continuous struggle against the powers of darkness, against wickedness in high places. And the record of the church is not without its triumphs. The slave trade and countless others of the ills of man have been ameliorated, if not destroyed, by the spread of Christianity. We dare not acquiesce in any doctrine of the inevitability of social evils any more than we dare content ourselves with vague theories of the inevitability of human progress. It is as great heresy to believe that man can do nothing as to believe that he can do everything.

The truth is that the church is too sensitive to contemporary moods. If our theology suffered from the sense of well-being which pervaded society before the world war, it suffers now from the well-nigh universal sense of frustration. Indeed, it is because the church responded too sympathetically to the mood of the pre-war period that it now absorbs too readily the mood of post-war years. We were unable to resist the seduction of the king's dainties; and we cannot now shake off the smoke of the king's furnace. When everyone called upon us to admire the "beautiful and massive" stones of the civilization which the nineteenth century bequeathed to

us, we could not imagine a time when those walls would fall. Now that scarcely one stone seems to be left upon another, we cannot imagine a time when there shall be peace within Jerusalem. All that we ask is that there be left enough for a Wailing Wall.

RELIGIOUS PROPHETS OF DESPAIR

It is one of the pitiable ironies of our religious situation that the war was not enough to shake the church—in America at least—out of its placid belief in the onward march of Christian civilization. Voices were certainly raised against the evils of our economic and social life, but few voices of despair suggesting that these evils must be accepted as inevitable were heard until America began to lose her money. If we had war, we could at least denounce war and repent of having blessed it. But if we have economic depression, we must, it seems, immediately adopt a philosophy of the utter hopelessness of human endeavor. Is it that this is the kind of furnace whose smoke clings most tenaciously to modern men?

When one considers this carefully, however, there is little mystery about it. The church is simply reflecting the despair which seizes our money-conscious people when their pocketbooks are deeply affected. In other words, we are often not prophets of the righteousness of God, of a Kingdom which demands obedience, but very faithful reporters of how the people feel. And today we are but as we were yesterday. If we are the prophets of despair now it is partly because we were at times the smug camp followers of optimistic business. Not long ago, Lisieux, in western France, had an authentic saint. She was only a simple nun, who lived for her garden, her poor and her God. But when she died hundreds of those whom she had helped marched silently through the church to look at her for the last time. Two scrubwomen stood in the porch of the church and talked of her. "Did you notice her feet?" asked one. "Yes," said the other; "they were white." "So white," said the first, "they looked as if she had been walking on light." Quite rightly the church canonized her. A few years ago, I waited for a while at the railroad station in Lisieux. Along the platform was a long train; and a busy young priest, with his cassock girded up, ran up and down checking off the carriages. I asked a French business man what it was all about. The train, it seemed, was made up of carriages full of pilgrims come to the shrine of the saint of Lisieux. "You see," continued my informant, "we have what you would call a live chamber of commerce, and you would be amazed how business has picked up at Lisieux since Therese was made a saint." Therese looked as if she had been walking on light, and the tradesmen were doing well at Lisieux. Thus we treated our saints.

STOCKMARKETS AS BAROMETERS

So, for a long while, we went our merry way conducting drives and building institutions, and projecting reforms. Perhaps this was well; but it was not well if we allowed optimists to persuade us that the stock-market report is the barometer of the grace of God, and that the kingdom comes by legislation. I do not say

that thoughtful men ever believed any such thing; but there were giants with statistics in those days, and the land seemed to flow with the financial equivalent of milk and honey. Surely, we said to ourselves, we shall evangelize the world in this generation. Certainly, we thought, the kingdom of God is just around the corner. One more law, one more drive, and we shall be almost there.

Then came the deluge. In poverty and distress, in war and its terrible harvest, our poor world went its way. The powers of this world had indeed heated and reheated the furnace, and many of our people, be it said to their credit, walked with much nobleness therein. But on every hand men proclaimed the "end of all



UMPHREY LEE

things," declaring to high heaven that peace and justice and righteousness are impossible, at least in this world; evil is on the throne and the righteous can only suffer. And just as too many churchmen had reechoed what the world had to say about prosperity and inevitable democracy and the automatic achievement of perfection, so now also the voice of the people was mistaken for the voice of God. Man cannot correct abuses here below, we began to say in our disillusionment. Away with all talk about reform: this is but American "activism." Man can do nothing but trust God and keep his soul dry.

One must not minimize the honest service that is being done religion by much of the preaching and writing that may seem pessimistic and which cannot escape the suspicion of being unduly influenced by the contemporary mood. Those who preach that man is destined to spend his days in fiery furnaces, and that there is no hope that will ever be any real conquering of the na-

tions of this earth by the spirit of the gospel have, at least, rebuked the naive teachings of which many of us were formerly guilty. We too easily ignored the weakness and evil of man, and if we cannot agree that God has left us hopeless in a hopeless world, at least we shall no longer talk of man as if he were but a slightly damaged god. Moreover, the chief defect of our former Cult of Good Hope was that it was moral but not religious. Those who despair of this dark world have not despaired of God. They have demanded that we cease depending upon some vague force that works for righteousness and turn our eyes to Him who walks the furnace with us and whose aspect is that of the Son of God. If the extreme optimism of pre-depression days was the thesis and the extreme pessimism of the present is the antithesis, the religious synthesis will be nearer the latter than the former.

But we must not forget that the Christian is the bearer of good news. We speak, indeed, of a life that is hid with Christ in God, a life whose standard of measurement is not in gold or silver or in things of man's devising. We are citizens of heaven, bidden to think of those things which are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report. But we are to bear witness that such things may be thought of in our present world and that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. We are to bear witness that by green pastures as well as in fiery furnaces we have the promise of One who will not leave us, neither forsake us. He has not given over either his people or his world. And of this we must speak to our fellows and to our children. There must be no self-pity after trial, no bitterness after sorrow, no hopelessness after distress. If by God's grace we shall come through the furnace, then must we walk into the future without the smell of fire upon our garments.

Our Crumbling Foundations

BY ROBERT P. SHULER

*If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the right-
eous do? Psalm 11:3.*

*Nevertheless, the foundations of God standeth sure.
II Timothy 2:19.*

A FEW months ago a very brilliant student of economic and social questions suggested that America was hanging at the end of a rope of sand. Possibly overstated, but none the less suggestive. Men seem to have become unstable in all their ways, and as the people go, so goes the state. We have surrendered substance and substituted finish. We have ignored the fiber and majored on the varnish. We are full of planning concerning education, culture, equipment, fitting. We lack material.

Once a college professor said to me: "Shuler, when these proud fathers fail to send anything to us, we are helpless. We can't send anything back to them."

What I am trying to say is that America needs a

revival of character, of manhood, of honor and integrity, of virtue and fidelity. We have lip-sticks, cigarettes, bathing suits, automobiles and everything that goes on the outside of the modern boy and girl. Our lack is inside.

I am speaking of foundations. Foundations are builded within. They are substantial. They are strong. They are serviceable. They are assuring. They undergird.

Following the earthquakes at Long Beach, California, I saw a newsboy pick up a lump of supposed mortar, lying in the midst of the destruction of one of the great school buildings of that city. He crumpled it to powder between his fingers and remarked to a fellow tradesman: "Lacks something in the mixture."

That's what's the matter within the nation. That's what is wrong with the church today. That is the lack of society. We lack that mighty binding, strengthening, fusing something that makes men stand up when every other creature is bowing down.

SPIRITUAL DISINTEGRATION

A friend was telling me recently about a calamity that came to the house in which he lived. One day it creened and trembled and leaned over as though it would fall. My friend was outraged. He made remarks about the architect who drew his plans and concerning the contractor who erected his building, which remarks I cannot afford to use here. Then his wife insisted that he crawl under his house and investigate. He did so. The mudsills were gone. The undergirdings were eaten out. The great beams upon which his house had rested were powder. The termites had eaten out his foundation. And buildings have a way of shifting and slipping about and moving disastrously when the foundations are gone.

The termites have been busy. Honor and virtue have disappeared. We have our hands in the wrong pockets. We are handling not only money recklessly, but also the confidence of our neighbors.

Back of our economic disaster was a moral collapse and back of our moral collapse was a spiritual disintegration. We lost our souls and then we lost our credit. We lost our honor and then men distrusted our word and would no longer have business dealings with us. The banker was afraid to loan the people money for fear they would never bring it back. The people were afraid to put their money in the bank, lest the banker turn up the next week in Mexico or elsewhere.

I was in New York city when the blue eagle first adorned the windows of this country. I said, and the newspapers quoted me widely: "If our men had been honest and sincere behind the window we would never have needed any eagle, blue or otherwise, in the window. And now since the eagle is there, it will be a laughable bird unless we have some honest and sincere men back of the window to back up our bird."

Jesus gave us the right philosophy when he told us of the house builded on the rock and its companion house builded on the sand. The one stood. The other went out. The house of disaster did not go out because it was not a good house. It was possibly as well constructed as the one that weathered the storm. It may

have been a richer and showier building. Its decoration and adornment may have been superb. But it fell. It fell because, while sand is fine in fair weather, it is shifting, unsteady, deceiving, untrustworthy material when storms assail.

FAITH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

And now, may I inquire, what are the foundations? What is the foundation upon which a home rests? I answer, faith. Faith binds a man and woman together for life. Faith cements their children into a strong and successful family circle. Faith is the foundation of every successful national endeavor. Everywhere, men are telling us that faith must be restored. Lack of confidence has wrecked us. Faith is the strongest element in social security of every character.

I have heard foolish men say that they cared not what a people believed, so they lived right. I contend that their very proposition is faulty. First, show me a man whose faith and confidence is warped and crooked who can or will or does live right. "If you will paint on your canvas the faith of a people, I will attempt the writing of the history of their nation," said a great historian. His offer was simple and his feat easy.

The church of today has neglected, I fear, the foundation substance in her attempt to make her building more sightly. She is engaged in polishing, fitting, adorning, equipping, none of which things are less than worthy. Her culture far surpasses that of the generation gone. Her ministry is the best equipped intellectually that ever voiced a message from the pulpit of the church. But there is acknowledged defeat in the midst of all this advance in method, in paraphernalia, in facilities, in equipment, in intellectual prowess and cultural supremacy. We have the wires all up in accepted fashion. But there is no "juice." We lack power. Unction is something we talk about. It no longer converts us into men of thunder. And the world is quick to recognize the lack.

My contention is that we must get back to our faith. We must find the rock again. We must march forth with a book that is the inspired word of the Living God. We must herald it with authority. We must proclaim its truth as the only hope of a hopeless world.

LIMITING GOD

We must find the size of God again. We have been seeking to squeeze him into human molds, and it does not work. We have sought to limit and confine him. We must find the girth of God and it cannot be done with a little human tapeline.

I remember that the majority of the spies came back talking long and loud of the size and ability of the sons of Anak. They stated that these mighty men made God's people look like grasshoppers in comparison. But two members of that committee dared to report that the sons of Anak, their proportion and prowess, did not make God look like a grasshopper. They even dared to venture the hope that Israel would give God a chance to show how much bigger and stronger he was than all the sons of Anak combined. And while their pleadings were in vain, history records that their contention was right and justified.

This generation needs to come back to the rock, Christ Jesus, to the mount called Calvary, to the borrowed tomb of a Savior who thought not to save himself until he had saved others. I tell you that our faith is more important than our program, than our equipment, than our fine buildings and all combined. Once a poor church swept a world toward the feet of Christ. Today, a rich and sufficient church stands with embarrassment beside the way while a world plunges toward chaos. They believed. Do we?

Out in my state of California, Upton Sinclair, the socialist, recently ran for governor and the campaign brought out the fact that he had once said that the church had taken Jesus from the people and had placed



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him in a stained glass window where he is useless and worthless and where he is often not even a good ornament. Churchmen all over the state were loud in their declarations that Sinclair had made an attack upon Jesus. But had he? Much as we may resent the accusation, is it not tragically true? Jesus who gave himself in his mission to the poor is now in the midst of the rich cathedral, while service is read and the organ peals. He is hidden by anthems and ritualistic chanting. Nor do the poor come to him in the midst of the pomp and splendor of the service.

My brethren, it is my firm conviction that we need to take Jesus back and introduce him to the multitude: his redeeming grace and never dying love; his ransoming blood, sufficient for the washing of the sins of men and the purification of their hearts; his sanctifying power and victorious healing of the souls of men. Let's put the blood back into the mixture. Let's discover again the "rock that is higher than I."

The church needs to concentrate on the ability of

God to regenerate and remake a man. It is not reform or social uplift that will save the nation and lift humanity from the mire. They are good and worthy. But "Ye must be born again," was the ultimatum of one who knew, and he has not changed his verdict.

Therefore it is my claim that a sadly shaken world must find again the foundations of Christianity and build thereon. The brain trust possibly had brains, but the nation is still lost. In fact, we dare no longer trust brains alone. Brains—sharpened, keen brains—without a heart that is right with God to restrain and constrain them—such brains menace the world today.

I have heard of this process for the building of a superman. In fact, we have builded him. He is smarter than the sheriff, the district attorney and the judge. He makes the police look foolish. He breaks into the bank, robs the filling station and steals our children from their play and charges us fifty thousand dollars to bring them home—sometimes dead. He is so brilliant in intellect that he took over the second largest American city and some think he still runs it from Atlanta, Georgia, or wherever he is imprisoned. He whittled out a wooden gun and took the machine guns from the guards up in Indiana. He's smart enough. But his heart is a total wreck. The foundations are builded within. Out of the heart are the issues of life. The heart must be attacked and saved. Otherwise the world is irredeemably lost. Nor can any institution or forces, outside the grace of God, save the heart of man.

ABIDING FOUNDATIONS

The foundations of God stand sure. He hath not left himself without witness and his voice rings out even in this dark hour: "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." His foundations abide forever and shall never be moved.

Upon such a rock he has planted his church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

It is our business to re-introduce this God to his task of world building and heaven making, for while his infinite power and resources know no limits, he depends upon human initiative for the opportunity. He needs our hands to point the way, our feet to carry the good tidings, our voices to herald his approach.

If our faith shall meet the challenge of his readiness and ability, the world will not sink despairingly to the ruin that now seems to be but a step away.

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

The first line of this old hymn is my testimony. The second line is history.

The All-Loving

SO the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself.
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Road Away From Disillusionment

By PAUL B. KERN

Abide with us; for is it toward evening, and the day is now far spent. Luke 24:29.

IT was a dark day in Jerusalem. Cleopas and his friend were turning their faces again to their humble peasant home in the nearby village of Emmaus. Their hearts were heavy with disappointment and their minds were benumbed by the terror of the events that had been happening before their eyes in the capital city. So many things had happened that they believed could never happen. The very center upon which they had built their life plans had suddenly given way and all their hopes and dreams were crashing down upon their dismayed and confused spirits. Jesus had been crucified and his disciples were scattering like sheep without a shepherd. These men, and the other devoted followers of the Nazarene, found themselves disillusioned, broken on the wheel of events which they could not control. The day was indeed far spent for them and life's hopes seemed about to flicker out in the twilight of despair.

We can understand the mood of these men today with a peculiar sympathy and sensitiveness. So many things have happened in our world that a few years ago seemed impossible, and so many of our hopes have been broken that we find ourselves closely akin in our experiences to these two men who centuries ago turned their faces away from a hill on which were three crosses and a tragedy that seemed to offer no bit of hope for their disillusioned spirits. Their plight was not unlike ours, for they had had no major part in the events which had transpired in Jerusalem. They were not the agents of this iniquity. They had not crucified Jesus. But none the less they were feeling the agony and the loss. They were being crushed by the weight of events which they could not control and for which they were in no sense responsible. Many of us today find ourselves victimized by what is happening around us in the economic and social structure, and our helplessness but adds to our sense of uneasiness and discomfiture. Our generation is confused. It has lost its way amid the darkening shadows that attend the end of an era. Somehow we must find the paths again that lead us into the morning. We must escape from our mood of disillusionment and return to a basic confidence that is rooted in the steadfastness of eternal values and unchanging realities.

GOD STILL LIVES

We shall find that these two disciples found a road away from their despair, which is, after all, open to every one of us upon whom the shadows are closing. And it is our purpose now to examine the ways in which this disastrous temper of discouragement may be conquered, that men in our generation may be free to move with confidence and assurance into a larger and fuller life.

These disciples were delivered by the assurance that whatever happens God still lives. They had lingered at the grave and seen the stone rolled against the opening

of the sepulcher. They had seen the Roman guard placed at the entrance and the seal of the Roman empire stamped upon it. It was the end of the whole chapter. Jesus was dead. The dream was broken and shattered. Their hopes were gone. They had committed their lives, as "men whom a dream possessed," to a great alluring ideal and given their loyalty to a compelling Personality. But now it had all ended in blood and death and darkness and the tomb. No wonder they were disillusioned and looked upon a future that seemed empty and lonely. Whither could they turn? They were wending their way back home, sad and dejected, to try to pick up once more the threads of their commonplace life. But as they journeyed a Stranger joined them. As he talked with them their hearts were strangely warmed. They were loath to let him go as they reached their cottage door. He must come in and abide, for the day was far spent. As they sat at the table that evening suddenly their eyes were opened and they realized that it was the Lord. With joyous and fluttering hearts they awoke to the fact that he was not dead after all, that God could not be holden of death, that all the power of the Roman empire was impotent to destroy the Lord of life. They realized that the fury of men could never destroy the life of God in the world.

And in addition to this fact another glorious truth came breaking into their awakening spirits. If Jesus was alive, he had not departed out of the world to some distant throne, remote and imperial, but he was along the dusty highway of their own lives, talking with them, humble peasants of Emmaus. It was at their own table that he broke the bread, and it was to their own eyes that the revealing certainty of his living presence was vouchsafed. No wonder their whole mood was changed. No wonder they rose and went back to Jerusalem with hurrying footsteps. He had once said, "I will not leave you comfortless." But now he had made good that word, and they discovered that none of the events that had transpired in these last few days could take God out of the world or away from their hearts.

A BULWARK OF STRENGTH

This assurance and certainty that God lives, whatever may be the shifting scenes and experience of our contemporary life, is a bulwark of strength which our generation needs. We feel that our age is so important and supreme that it can overshadow the eternal ages of God, and that our despair and skepticism can alter the basic laws of the universe. The love of God is just as sure and dependable as the laws of nature. We build our material lives upon certain discoverable laws of nature. We trust them in all our physical movements and find that they do not betray us. They are in no sense dependent upon our peculiar personal circumstances. They belong to the structure of life. So also is the fact of the love of God. It is there, unchanging, immutable, ever accessible to our needy souls. A new conviction may come to us in this troubled and broken generation if only we can be sure that behind the clouds "God is still keeping watch above his own."

I recall coming one morning into the harbor of Yokohama. Friends who had made the trip before told us that as we approached the port we ought to be able to

see Mount Fuji on our left. But as we peered over the rail there was no mountain in sight, only a thick haze of cloud lying low on the horizon. As we were about to turn away in disappointment suddenly the sun came through in strength and the clouds were parted like some vast celestial curtain and there before us stood the snow-capped heights of Fujiyama, that ethereal emblem of beauty, the spiritual symbol that speaks to the soul of Japan. It had been there all the while but only the lifting clouds revealed to us its presence in splendor and beauty.

It has always been an interesting fact to me that when Jesus joined these dismayed disciples and began to talk to them, the subject of his conversation carried them far



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back beyond what had been happening in Jerusalem. They were amazed that he seemed to be unaware of all those recent events. That was not the case, however. He was viewing them in the light of a historic background and a spiritual history which they could not comprehend but which to him gave meaning to all that had transpired so recently before their eyes. He unfolds the Scriptures to them and traces the movements of God through the ages even down to the tragedy of the cross itself. Thus they were delivered by rediscovering the meaning of the written Word of God.

Life is consistent. Events can be understood only in their relationships. Our difficulties today grow largely out of the fact that we have lost this cumulative power of historic events which throw light upon our present dilemmas. If only we could find again the Word of God! If only we could realize that there are truths and secrets hidden away in the experiences of other men which would deliver us from our confusion. In our self-sufficient emphasis upon our own age and genera-

tion we have scorned too long the voice of God which is found in the ancient history of our fathers, and neglected the lessons which we might learn from those whose biographies are a part of the spiritual heritage of the race. Jesus opened the Scriptures to these men and planted their feet again upon the solid rock. They began to see that their own little sector of life had no meaning apart from the total ongoing process of the ages. We need today a similar deliverance from our passion for the temporary and the evanescent.

Too often we have argued ourselves into believing that the Bible has no message for us. We have judged it in the light of our own egoism and pride. But we discover that it is judging us, that we are being haled before the tribunal of these ageless facts. We have not taken it seriously, only to discover that it is in fact about the only serious word upon which we can at last depend. We have builded our golden calves and bowed down to our gods of mammon, thinking that they would deliver us. But the judgments of God have rested on our generation and we have not been able to escape from the condemnation which righteousness and truth have delivered against us. We should be much freer from disillusionment if we could separate ourselves from the feeling of pride and self-sufficiency which plagues us into believing that our humanistic philosophy of life needs no rootage in the past but only a free and untrammelled opportunity to exploit the present.

FINDING GOD ANEW

The third road along which these men traveled into the light is also told us in this graphic, moving story of the long ago. They had a new experience of God. Through those golden days when Jesus taught the multitude they had stood on the fringe of the crowd and heard his wonderful words. In those last tragic hours they had doubtless been silent witnesses of his marvelous poise and his deep agony of spirit. They had believed on him because there was something about the whole drama that chained their minds and mastered their loyalty. Here however was a new experience. Jesus had left the multitude and come into their own personal lives. He had talked to them; he had crossed their threshold; he had sat at their table; their eyes had beheld him; he had entered into the innermost secret place of their lives. They were no more in doubt. They were no more disillusioned. Now they knew that he was alive. Before they left Jerusalem they had heard from the women that the sepulcher was open, but they could not believe it. Now they knew it. They had heard that he had been seen by certain devoted followers. Now he had been seen of them. Loyalty was moving out of the realm of theory into actual experience. And there was born in their hearts a conviction that Jesus was not only alive but that he was a part of their own life.

The withering peril of much of our religious life today is the lack of this element of experimental certainty. Religion is a matter of hearsay. It is a second-hand inheritance from a parent or an atmospheric implication from our common life. This explains much of the indifference of church members and so-called religious people. For them the Christian life is a set of rules and traditions or outward forms of worship and social cus-

tom. They do not know the glowing reality of an inner experience of Christ. God lives, but he does not live in them. Jesus lived, but he does not live in their hearts.

Our eyes need to be opened that we may see him, for he is here, revealing himself in the beauty of a world that responds in hillside and meadow, in cloud and sky, to his beauteous self-revelation. He is here in the volumes of truth that come to our hands and stir our minds. He is here in the goodness of human hearts, the loving guilelessness of little children, the sacrificial ardor of noble souls, the rugged courage of valiant warriors, and in the spirits of all those who sanctify themselves for the good of mankind. And then some of us have met him face to face. He has spoken his authentic word to our innermost souls. We know him more intimately and more gloriously than we know any human friend.

There is a road that leads out of our weary disillusionment, but it is no short, quick pathway. It is a road of rediscovery along which ancient footsteps may be found; and new vistas of hope and light will break upon us out of the long ago. It is a safe highway because he journeys along that road and grants unto us, when we are willing to walk with him, the peace which he gives to those who receive him in their hearts.

I came one day across that restless body of water that separates China from Japan. The turbulent roughness of the Yellow Sea had made an uncomfortable and perilous journey. Suddenly the boat seemed to be still again. The rocking and the pitching ceased. Going to the deck I looked out to discover that as the evening came on and the shadows dropped down across the western sky we had slipped into the Inland Sea and were safe in the landlocked security of that lovely body of water. So, out of our troubled, distorted disillusionment we may slip into the peace which Christ offers to those who trust his laws and rest in his love.

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?

The voice of Jesus whispers, Peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?

To do the will of Jesus—this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?

Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

The Southern Methodist Number

The five Southern Methodist ministers whose sermons appear in this issue were selected, not by the Editor of The Christian Century Pulpit, but as a result of a ballot sent to the more than 8,000 ministers listed in the year book of the Methodist Episcopal church (South). These ministers were asked to name the preachers whom they would like to have represent their denomination in this special number. The Christian Century Pulpit honors itself in extending its hospitality to these great preachers whom their brethren have delighted thus to honor. The Methodist brethren of the South will be pleased to give the hand of leadership in their special number to a Northern Methodist, Dr. Crane, and a Presbyterian, Dr. Buttrick.

Achieving The Impossible

BY HENRY H. CRANE

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were encompassed about seven times. Hebrews 11:30.

"IT can't be done!" That familiar expression is a perfectly good statement of what is *not so*! It is a belated byword that no modern man should ever utter—even to himself, much less aloud. The great, good truth was given us long ago, and on the best possible authority: "All things are possible to him that believeth." And he who said that gave abundant proof of its truth by doing all sorts of impossible things himself. So they called him a miracle worker, and said he was in a class quite by himself. Obviously he was. Yet he also said that others would do greater works than he had done.

Many persons assume that science has gone way on ahead of religion. Religion is reactionary; science is progressive. So 'tis said. And a superficial survey of certain obvious facts would seem to justify the assumption. But I wonder if it isn't a greater truth to say that in the really vital issues of life, science, so far from having gone ahead of religion, has only recently begun to catch up to it.

Take this matter of achieving the impossible, for example. Religion has said all along that man's special prerogative is to be a miracle worker. And not only has it said it, but it has demonstrated it with all sorts of dramatic illustrations. And more than that, it has actually worked out the technique, in quite elaborate detail, of "doing the thing that cannot be done." But the skeptical science would not believe the stories, learn anything from the illustrations, nor try the suggested technique,—until recently! But now, at long last, it has begun to believe some of the deep truths taught in certain ancient scriptural stories. It has tested the miracle methods, and has discovered that the methods work—miracles! And now science is leaping ahead furiously—catching up with religion.

"TO HIM THAT BELIEVETH"

Consider the story of the conquest of Jericho as a typical illustration of the ancient method of pointing out perennial principles for accomplishing impossibilities. Of course in this old world tale no one expects to find any such scientific statement as might be prepared by some modern research student. Here is nothing other than a dramatic depiction of certain timeless truths discerned and set forth by a man with his imagination on fire. Obviously he is not trying to record history; he is attempting to reveal a mystery. He is not concerned with academic accuracy; he is consumed with a high sense of spiritual adequacy. He is endeavoring to say, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

It is a magnificent epic, that of the Israelites and their quest for the Promised Land. For long years this potentially powerful people had been in bondage to the Egyptians. At last came a Moses with a vision of emancipa-

tion, a dream of deliverance. He challenged his fellow slaves to rise from their serfdom and follow him to freedom and to power. And they responded; not at first, but eventually. Grimly they set themselves to the task of doing what obviously they could not do. There were impossibilities on every hand. The thing simply could not be done. So they proceeded to do it. Which, incidentally, is the only way men gain their freedom from whatsoever bondage they may be in.

The capture of Jericho was such a typical impossibility that it may be wise to consider the way it was accomplished. One Joshua had succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites. But he was a worthy successor, for he was a miracle worker, too. It is well that he was, other-



HENRY H. CRANE

wise we should never have heard of the Israelites, perhaps—unless some other doer of the impossible should have arisen. For if that doughty people were ever to come into their own and possess the Promised Land, they had to conquer the impregnable city of Jericho. That required a miracle worker.

As Joshua stood over against that towering impossibility, meditating upon its achievement, and wondering how to accomplish it, he had a vision of the divine. That is important—very! Vision! Without vision the people perish—and so does the possibility of achieving the impossible. But vision, functioning at its best, means awareness of a Power beyond oneself. Some call it divine aid, some the forces of nature, some the cooperation of the cosmos, some—God. Joshua called it God. In any event he was filled with a great courage, a divine daring. From the vision came an absurd idea, a ridiculous scheme, a "visionary" plan. And Joshua had courage enough to try it.

It all sounds frightfully fanciful, to say the least. No wonder it has been flouted as nothing more than an ancient, oriental fairy tale. But along comes science and begins to use the principles propounded in this ancient parable, and behold—miracles everywhere! The fact is, the whole story of the great achievements of this last amazing century is but the repetition of the conquest of Jericho, where men, by strange means, accomplish impossibilities.

Now any man who wishes to live in this miracle-working modern day with any sense of triumph must master these primary principles whereby the impossible is achieved. The tragedy of the present moment of depression is that there is an eclipse of vision, a paralysis of fear, an abatement of effort and a lack of confidence. The result is that the only men available just now are those who can do what is possible. That is not what is needed. What this impotent old world must have are men who can do what they say cannot be done. For the time being no one seems to be singing that once familiar song of the Panama canal diggers:

Got any rivers you say are uncrossable?

Got any mountains you want tunneled through?

We specialize in the wholly impossible,

Doing the things that no man can do.

That song should be revived and made, not a national, but a world anthem. But it will not be sung until men

begin putting the ancient principles into practice again—and continue to achieve the impossible.

The present period of depression is a huge city of Jericho. Before it men stand baffled and dismayed. It is impossible to overcome. But that is just the challenge. If it cannot be done, it must be done. As "The Lawd" says in the famous play called "The Green Pastures": "It's time to pass another miracle!"

But the trouble is, there is a Jericho in every man's life, as well as in every city, state and nation. There is some goal, some citadel of impossibility that must be achieved. How can it be done?

VISION AS AN AID TO ACHIEVEMENT

Consider the four most obvious principles of procedure. In the first place there must be *vision*—an awareness of available aid outside oneself. One of the most remarkable characteristics of any human being is his capacity to be inspired. No other creature possesses such capacity save man. That is why it is never possible to say that anything is impossible if some living person is in any way involved. When man enters a situation, the unpredictable element invariably accompanies him. One can tell just what strain an iron bar can stand, or measure precisely the force of steam, or gauge with accuracy the inevitable effects of certain causes. But with man involved, none can predict what may happen—for his

A Pastoral Prayer

BY G. RAY JORDAN

WE render Thee hearty thanks, gracious and divine Father, for Thy power, Thy wisdom, Thy goodness. We are happy because we can trust Thee. We believe in Thee; increase our faith!

We would not place our finite understanding above Thy divine wisdom. We do not come asking Thee to *give us*. Rather we pray the wiser prayer of the prodigal: *Make us!* Make us the kind of persons we ought to be, more and more like Jesus Christ. This is our earnest prayer. It is the deep desire of our hearts.

We remember that Jesus was strong and manly, that he did his work with joy because his devotion and his strength made this possible. So, we are not asking for lighter burdens, but for stronger backs. We desire an increased capacity to do what needs to be done. We are not seeking release from our responsibilities, but power to discharge them—and a real appreciation of their privilege. We do not know that real tasks always bestow genuine honor. We want to be able to render every service cheerfully. We want to be strong men and women who rejoice to do Thy will.

Again, we are not praying that we may be removed from this world, either figuratively or literally. We do not ask that we may escape the tasks, the temptations and the trials which life in a world like this brings. We do ask that we may be kept from evil. Guard us from moral harm! Save us from ethical failure!

Nor are we seeking material blessings, beyond our needs. Thou knowest our needs. We do seek those spiritual endowments of an ennobled personality. May

we not profess to know the difference between temporal and eternal values, and yet live as if all that counts is what can be seen and handled. We want our affections centered on the things above. We seek the enduring satisfactions of life, those that shall abide forever.

Yet, while we do not place the interests of our bodies above the welfare of our personalities, we do seek to understand that our characters can develop into Christ-likeness only when we remember all the needs of the people with whom we live. We want always to be thinking, our Father, about all our brothers and sisters, Thy children. We earnestly pray for Thy wisdom and Thy love so that we can help create the kind of social order Jesus had in mind when he talked about the Kingdom of God.

Our Father! This is the prayer we would make in word and in life! May we so live that we will demonstrate that we believe in Thy fatherhood. Let us live like Thy children should live. Let us live as though all people were Thy children—just as they are! We join our hearts and lives with theirs. May Thy Spirit come into the souls of all men and women. Give us Thy greatest gift, the gift of Thyself! May this world be Thy world, in deed, in spirit, in character; and may we have a glorious part in helping to make it the kind of world it ought to be—the home of genuine Christians!

This is our earnest prayer. Help us to bend all our efforts toward its answer. We pray in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

capacity to be inspired can never be estimated. How amazing it is! One man may be inspired by great books, great music or noble art; another by high faith in a true friend; another by a giant belief in the Infinite Unseen Ally. Such inspiration opens his eyes and he sees "not the things that are seen, which are temporal, but the things which are unseen, which are eternal."

Vision is possible for all men, but the things one sees depends upon what he habitually looks for. That is to say, the kind of inspiration one gets depends primarily upon the thoughts he has been living with, the mental images he has been cherishing, the ideals he has been holding in his heart.

If Joshua had thought constantly of the flesh-pots of Egypt, if he had held the pictures of ease and self-indulgence habitually before his mind, if he had cherished the ideal of self-aggrandizement in his heart, whatever he might have seen would have been worthless or devilish. But because of his unselfish devotion to the welfare of his race, because of the purity of his ideal and the passion of his high purpose to possess the Promised Land, when he looked, he saw—God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And one who sees God is aware of available aid outside himself, is convinced of the possibility of possessing power that is inexhaustible.

The difference between a magnet and an ordinary piece of steel is not that one is inherently stronger than the other, but that a magnet appropriates power of the universe for its use, while a common piece of steel is satisfied with its own puny strength. The billions of electrons in steel all have their positive and negative poles, all counteracting or neutralizing each other. In a magnet these electrons are ordered, the positive poles all pointing one way, the negative the other, thus allowing the magnetic current of the earth to pass through it and give it drawing power. Vision born of a great purpose in like manner organizes all the conflicting desires and neutralizes ambitions in the life of a man, and he becomes aware of resources of power otherwise undreamed of.

POWER THAT COMES FROM COURAGE

Then comes *courage*, the second significant factor in achieving the impossible. There is a popular delusion abroad that the best brand of bravery is that which nerves a man to battle, enables him to attack, fortifies him to face a foe and fight. It is not so. Any animal will fight when cornered, or even well frightened. It requires some courage, no doubt, to stand up and strike out boldly; but it is a very common type of courage. The higher quality of courage is that which enables a man to face a terrifying situation with steady nerves and moral self-mastery and to conquer it. The essence of real courage is mastery—of self and of situation.

An incident in the life of Andrew Jackson, when he was judge in an inferior court in Tennessee, reveals the quality of courage that characterized him all his days. He was conducting the trial of a notorious outlaw. In those rough pioneer days the man on trial was not always thoroughly disarmed. In this instance, therefore, when the defendant saw that the testimony was altogether too damaging, and that the case was going against him, he determined to take the situation in his own hands. He

suddenly drew a pistol from his pocket, backed into a corner, and yelled: "Guilty or not guilty, you'll never take me. I'll blow off the head of the first man who moves."

Andrew Jackson rapped on the desk and said to the sheriff: "Disarm that man and lock him up." An ominous silence ensued. Nobody moved. Again he rapped on the desk and said: "Did you hear what I said?" The sheriff, paralyzed with fear, stood motionless. A third time Jackson struck the bench. "This court is adjourned for three minutes," he declared. Then, with a look of contempt on his face, he arose from his chair and walked straight toward the outlaw, who, leveling his gun at the head of the approaching judge, said viciously: "Another step, and I fire!" Jackson never hesitated. Putting out his hand, he said with firmness: "Give me that gun!" Suddenly a strange impotency seized the man. He dropped the gun. He wilted, and broke.

PERSISTENT EFFORT

Always courage is required to face the formidable fortress of Jericho. But it is not the courage of rash, frenzied, impetuous attack that is demanded. It is the calm, deliberate, unhurried approach of perfect self-mastery that betokens the inevitable capitulation of the stronghold that stands in the way of achievement. Fear is pure poison; it paralyzes one's powers and dissipates his purpose. Courage is indispensable.

Then, in the third place, there must be unremitting *effort*. The very element in the ancient scriptural story that seems most fantastic is perhaps the most important phase of the whole picture. For six long days the Israelites marched, not at, but around the city, and then on the seventh day they circled it seven times. Perfect illustration that, of the apparently unnecessary effort so constantly expended in fulfilling the conditions that must be met if certain results are to be achieved.

Much has been said in this message about miracles, and it is commonly assumed that a miracle implies a breaking of the law of nature. But that is a mistake. Nothing is ever accomplished save as certain conditions are fulfilled. And that requires effort; another less attractive name for which is hard work.

Whenever any apparently impossible task is performed there always seems to be an element of luck, or great good fortune, in the situation. Perhaps it might have been some peculiar coincidence, it is said, and it just happened to occur at the right time. The walls of Jericho, for example, fell at such a time as to make those Israelites think their marching and shouting did it. It was, to use the vernacular, a "lucky break." So it seems with so many discoverers or inventors; they are just fortunate enough to find the thing that unlocks the mystery or solves the problem.

It is interesting, however, to note that the so-called "lucky" ones are almost invariably the very persons who have been walking and walking around their problem seven, and sometimes seventy times seven, weary days.

CONFIDENCE BRINGS THE VICTORY

Lastly, there must be *confidence*. When the marching is finally over, then comes the blast on the ram's horn—symbol of confidence that something is going to happen.

And something does happen: the walls of the city fall down flat. It makes a vast deal of difference what a man believes he can do. If he had faith in himself his ability is enhanced more than he realizes. How frequently and how forcefully this is illustrated in the commonest experiences of life: a baby learning to walk, or an adult trying to swim or ride a bicycle. Confidence means victory.

Some time ago a brilliant psychologist wrote that the idea one holds of confidence enhances his power at least by one-half, and the idea one holds of weakness or impotency minimizes his normal strength by at least two-thirds. To demonstrate the validity of this contention he had three men grip a dynamometer as hard as they could. Their average grip registered 101 pounds. He then hypnotized them, and thus allayed all thoughts other than the one he suggested to them. He gave these men the idea that they were very weak, and then asked them to grip the dynamometer again as hard as they could. They obeyed, and the average was 29 pounds. He then supplanted the idea of weakness with that of strength, and asked them to grip the dynamometer again for the third time. The average was 142 pounds. And the difference in accomplishment was all a matter of what they believed. No wonder faith is such a force: it taps reservoirs of power that nothing else can reach.

So the walls of Jericho fell down flat. The impossible was achieved. The thing that simply could not be done—was done. Vision, courage, effort and confidence—useful keys to unlock the secret doors of the strongholds that block the way to the Promised Land.

Seeing and Believing

BY GEORGE A. BUTTRICK

Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20:29.

IN Browning's poem, "Bishop Bloughram's Apology," the Bishop explains to a skeptic why he accepts the Christian faith. It is a strange poem—like a rambling and twisted music, but with ever and again a rich coda or a theme as haunting as the Holy Grail theme in "Parsifal." We do not hear the skeptic, except as the Bishop anticipates his objections, states them strongly, and answers them. We do not even see the skeptic until the very end of the poem, when, Browning tells us, he has bought settler's implements:

And started for Australia—there, I hope,
By this time he has tested his first plough,
And studied his last chapter of St. John.

Our text is not actually in the last chapter of St. John. But, with due respect to Robert Browning, it comes from a story even more appropriate for an honest skeptic.

I

Thomas, being "doubting Thomas," would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. He hinted that the other disciples were deluded, or intent to

delude: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails. . . . I will not believe." Eight days later Jesus entered, "the doors being shut." He turned to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands . . . and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas knelt then, his heart broken by joy: "My Lord and my God." Thereupon the comment, not as rebuke, but as quietly incisive truth: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Now what can that mean?

It concerns us. Thomas's "Except I see . . . I will not believe" might serve as an almost perfect formula of our modern skepticism. Did Jesus rise? Is Easter Day merely a custom—an enthusiasm—whipped up by store advertising, brighter days of spring, and a religious emotion given annual opportunity? *Did* Jesus rise? Or did the women revive him in the tomb from what only seemed death? And are the resurrection stories merely stories? In any event, we have not seen Jesus. So this text concerns us: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

II

"Except I see . . . I will not believe." That has been our formula, and we have been proud of it; though Jesus here broadly hints that it has scant blessedness. It has been a scientific age, and science (at least in its impact on the world) is devoted to externals. By the telescope we can see the flames leaping out from the great fire of the sun. By the microscope we can see the staphylococcus germ in a wound. By the X-ray we can see the inside of the body. By the "lie-detector" (surely the climax of externalism!) we can see by an instrument measuring the quickened pace of the blood if a man is telling truth or untruth. So eagerly have we weighed and measured that we are now ready to deny reality to everything that cannot be placed on a scale or poured into a test-tube or seen through a lens. "Except I see . . . I will not believe." We have said it, and been proud of what we called our mental honesty. Of course a man could imprison himself away from all human contact, and be able after a year or two to deny with complete mental honesty the fact of human love. But his mental honesty would still be blind, inane and wretched.

What we call "our scientific age" has been too largely a cult of the senses. An automobile is swifter feet. An airplane is wings. An adding-machine is an accurate mathematical brain. A microscope is a keener eye. The radio is keener ear. But of what use swifter feet if we surround the longer roads with advertising, hotdog stands and gas-stations? Of what use a keener ear if most of what we hear is commercial greed in thinly disguised mendacity, or jazz, or political demagoguery? John Burroughs said that much of our so-called "progress" was improved means to unimproved ends. But why should that comment surprise us? We can *see* means, and therefore we believe in them. We cannot see "ends" (or they would not be "ends," they would be "beginnings"); and therefore we disbelieve in them. Our absorption with the rind and our denial of the core has perforce made us shallow. We are brilliant, but stricken with misgivings. We are successful, but hag-

ridden by wars, hates, fears and disillusionments. If you wished to place a diagnostic finger on the secret malady, you might come at last to our boasted formula: "Except I see . . . I will not believe." There is a nobler faculty in us than physical sight or the analytical brain.

What is best worth proving cannot be proved. Ten-nyson said it years ago:

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in . . .
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Art not thyself in converse with thyself;
For nothing worthy proving can be proven
Nor yet disproven: wherefore be thou wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith.

III

But let it be clear: this is no counsel of unreason. God gave us eyes and brain, and gave them to be used. Religion that is inconsistent within itself or contrary to known facts is not religion: it is superstition. We do not recommend superstition. Sherwood Eddy has well said: "Faith is not believing something despite the evidence: it is daring something despite the consequence." Faith is not the violation of knowledge: it is the prophecy of fuller knowledge. Faith is the pioneer who believes in the new continent, and sails the sea, and plants the flag: reason is the settler who subdues the land and makes it blossom as the rose.

But let us take instances. They, better than definition, will make clear the relation between faith and sight. Mallory tried to climb Mount Everest, and failed. He thought the mountain was there to be climbed: that difficulties exist as a challenge to man's spirit, and are their own guarantee of victory. But that "thought" was a faith. Nobody can possibly prove it, or disprove it. You can say, if you wish, that Mount Everest was made by a devil who delights to mock men who think they are heroes, and lures them to destruction. There is one form of pneumonia which is yet completely baffling; no cure has yet been found for extreme tuberculosis; chaulmoogra oil is not a sure remedy for leprosy; cancer is still a dark mystery. Can these mountains be scaled? Many Mallorys in the realm of research say they can. But that is a faith. Yet if the faith flagged, medical reason would promptly flag and die. In this instance faith is not the violation of reason: it is the lifeblood of reason.

Let us take another instance. Can human nature be trusted? Can it be trusted to rid itself of armaments? Can it be trusted with democracy, or must it be driven by a dictator's whip? Can it be trusted to set its economic house in honest and generous order? Can it be trusted to build real homes? We cannot prove it, though noble lives with Christ for Captain stand forth as evidence. We cannot disprove it, though criminals and psychopaths and perverts confirm our fears. What then? We *must believe* that people can be trusted. We must cling to an inborn faith beyond the forms of faith. We do, as a matter of fact. That is why we marry, and rear children, and enter professions, and engage

in trade. And we *must*—or our human comradeship will be splintered into feuds, and suicide will become the only sound philosophy.

Is there a God? He seems in Rectitude to be shadowed forth in our conscience. He seems in Beauty to be hinted by the loveliness of springtime. He seems in Love to be the universal Fountain-head of all our tiny rivulets of compassion. But God cannot be seen, or weighed, or held in the hand, or measured. He cannot be proved—or disproved. This experience seems to trace his coming; that experience seems to make him a mocking Void. What then? We grasp him by faith:

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness. Let it grow. . . .

Is Christ risen? The Resurrection-stories, however interpreted, point beyond themselves to some surging



GEORGE A. BUTTRICK

Truth and Tide which made despondency into triumph, and Saturday into Sunday, and a common gallows into an uplifted sign of salvation. And Jesus, as we read about him, seems like a Voice, a Hand, and Eyes, rather than a remote Figure in a remote Book. Yet—we were not there when Jesus entered, "the doors being shut." It may be that the disciples were victims of hallucination, and we of annual Easter propaganda. It cannot be scientifically proved or disproved. We must believe it—or else live in the shudder of spirit which says that Christ was deceived because all fair hope and all courage of life are by nature deceitful:

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
As of the unjust, so of the just—
Yea, of that Just One too!

This sad Gospel ever is true:
Christ is not risen!

Either faith or that unfaith: and neither can be proved
or disproved.

IV

We begin to understand the simple elements in faith. It is first the "invincible surmise" (as much a part of life as life is life) which says within us that difficulties can be overcome; that disease can and must be conquered; that human nature can be trusted and made glorious; that God is shadowed forth in our conscience and compassion; and that Jesus, being bound up with God's life, shared God's immortality and must of necessity have risen from the dead. Faith is first of all *that*—a sure flash and gleam of the soul. It is in everybody, and it is a deeper dimension than reason. Without it reason would promptly become insanity. First of all it is that; and next it is the courage (often it seems a blind courage) which "dares something despite the consequence." Faith is the basic assurance of the soul become the heroic venture.

"Except I see . . . I will not believe." But the real fun in living is to believe before you see! Mallory will not believe he can climb Mount Everest until someone takes him there on a scenic railroad, and he sees himself standing on the summit? What doctrine is this? The man who built the scenic railroad in that instance would have to believe without seeing, and Mallory then would be his debtor. Columbus will not believe he can reach the Indies by traveling west instead of east until someone brings them to him by a westward track? That research man in the Rockefeller Institute will not believe cancer can be cured until somebody cures it: meanwhile he will "shut up shop"? Lindbergh will not start for France until he is absolutely guaranteed a safe arrival?

Do we really wish to see? Go to a ball game: you can know everything that happens before it happens. Nay, you would not wish to go! Go to the theater: no plot now, for everything is understood from the beginning. Nay, you would not wish to go! No battle in life, no anxiety, no courage, no prayers in the night: the veil is drawn, a neat little heaven appears, all the answers are yours before you begin to work on the problem. Nay, you would not wish to live! Who said "seeing is believing"? Seeing is precisely not believing. Seeing is stagnation, a perpetual infancy, a drab and drawn-out death. Thomas has seen, and therefore believes. His eyes have had their exercise, but his soul is sick! "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

V

It is not hard to understand *why* they are blessed. Character is unified. Imagine how poor a friendship would be if one party to it were saying always: "I am not sure I can trust this man. I must suspend judgment." So long as judgment is suspended, the mind is halted or divided. Obviously the progress of human nature then is blocked. Unity and momentum come of faith.

Likewise character is made buoyant. How could it be otherwise for the man who by strong resolve is living in his hopes? "I can trust my neighbors," he is saying. "I

do believe my conscience is of God, as every ray of light comes from the sky. My compassion has tidal movements vaster than itself. I believe in God, and shall live as in his sight." Such a man is filled with zest. He exclaims with Paul: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory."

Best of all, character is made strong in courage. Paracelsus is made to say in the Browning poem that there are:

Two points in the adventure of the diver:
One when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge?
One when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?

What the poem does not say is that the beggar was enriched by more than a pearl. He had the unity of nature and the joy that comes of living in a hope: the pearl, he said to himself, is there! And more: his plunge into darkness gave him courage—a sense of life worthily lived. He did not crave a pearl handed to him on a silver tray: he would rather dive for it. For a character made strong through the overcoming of odds is treasure better than a pearl.

VI

Did Jesus rise from the dead? "Except I see . . . I will not believe." Say it, if you will. It is the mood of the age, but it has brought us little joy. We have possessions, but we are not rich. We have pleasures, but no pleasure. We can go faster than ever, but we never arrive. St. Francis who lived in his soul rather than in his eyes was more happy than we, and more creative. "Except I see . . . I will not believe." Such is the demand; but even to those who live in their eyes Christ is kind. Heaven must accommodate itself to their little tests: the Atlantic must take shape from their backyard. Let it be so: heaven is still compassion, and Christ will say: "Reach hither thy finger . . . and be not faithless, but believing."

But some of us are almost glad we were not there: we have chance of fuller blessedness. Deep within is the surmise which years and death cannot drown that Jesus is "such stuff as *life* is made on." God was in him. If not, the spirit in him is better than God; and will at last conquer God. Gleams come and go to support us in the faith: his gallows strangely abides. His eyes seem to be on us. But we cannot prove it. We would not wish to prove it—except in the courage which puts a surmise to the test. Only in that venture can the self be unified, hopeful, and made strong. Faith is a better level of life than sight. We would not be cheated of our risk. "Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things." Hereafter in a land of clearer seeing, we shall have the fun of saying: "Oh, I knew it was so." In any event, it is a grand way to live. But surely we shall hear him say: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Light in Darkness

LOSING my way, I groped, with fears beset;
Dim grew the day; on came the blinding night;
Hopeless, I knelt and closed my eyes to pray—

Lo, all about me streamed the Light!

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

The Question of Funerals

BY HERBERT L. WILLETT

AS civilization has advanced, the practices connected with death and the disposal of the remains of the dead have steadily tended toward enlightenment and decorum. Primitive customs were usually crude and barbaric. The death of a member of the household was often announced by the shrieks of the women of the family, and any neighbors who might be present. Wailing during the brief period between death and the funeral rites was constant, not wholly as an expression of grief but as well as a mark of compliance with the expected social habits of the community. The funeral procession was made up in part of the hired mourners, members of a professional guild employed for that purpose. Many references to such practices are found in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. It was taken for granted that when "man goeth to his long home, the mourners go about the streets." In parts of the orient at the present time similar customs prevail. It appears to be the conviction of the community that propriety demands a somewhat ostentatious show of sorrow on the part of all who are connected by kinship with the deceased.

● *Early and Medieval Views of Death*

The outstanding exception to this cheerless attitude toward death among early peoples is found among the Greeks, whose funeral monuments, in such a cemetery as the Alysamps at Athens, disclose a singularly calm and even comfortable attitude toward death. There one observes family scenes which recall the happiness of domestic life. The household is gathered in a cheerful circle, reminiscent of joyous times in the past, which are to be cherished as treasured memories. These scenes are not connected with any expectation of future reunion, but are the tokens of a habit of mind which sets store by past friendships and affections, and will not yield to the depression which death usually brings. This same cheerful note is sounded in the early Christian burials, particularly those of the catacombs, where the joy of holy fellowship anticipated in the life to come has robbed death of all its somberness, and has even made martyrdom a glorious adventure.

The middle ages, and the influence of the monastic system, brought a recrudescence of the gloom which paganism had cast over death. Much of the hope and comfort which Christian faith had imparted to the experi-

ence of departure from the earth was clouded by a calculated effort to invest it with gloom, and to make its memorials suggestive of darkness and tragedy. The intrusion of death into any household is the inevitable occasion of sadness. Sorrow at such bereavement is the unescapable price



HERBERT L. WILLETT

which love exacts. But such sorrow ought not to be deepened by the deliberate effort to increase the sense of depression, to which too many of the current funeral customs lend themselves.

● *The "Successful" Funeral*

One recalls the customary funerals of an earlier and more provincial type. It was thought essential to have a numerous gathering, and a long procession to the cemetery. The members of the family of the deceased, particularly the women, thought it incumbent upon them to don garments of the deepest black, which they were to continue to wear until time had permitted the gradual assumption of grays and colors. There was always music, of the appropriately funereal type, a feature which is especially trying to any sensitive nature on such occasions, and is happily being omitted from such services, save on occasions of a marked public character. The preacher was expected to extol the virtues of the departed in such moving terms as brought tears to all eyes. Indeed a successful funeral was one which laid special emphasis upon the pathetic elements in the experience, and sent the audience away in a satisfied mood of tearfulness.

Worst of all was the exposure of the remains to the curious gaze of the audience, filing past the coffin, and taking "the last look." This unpleasant feature of funeral procedure is fast giving way to more suitable procedure. If people must look upon the dead, it ought to be at some other time and place; either at the home, or at mortuary rooms, or at a time apart from the public services. When friends look upon the faces of the departed and comment upon "how natural they look," they forget that the art of the mortician can do almost anything with a human face in the way of making it lifelike and natural. Better far would it be if one could be remembered as he looked in life, and not survive in the memory of friends as he appeared after death.

● *Costly Display to Be Shunned*

Then too it ought to be kept in mind that a funeral is no proper time for costly display. It is natural that those who are in sorrow should wish to do all that is fitting in the services for their dead. But one can recall many occasions on which there was a lavishness of display quite beyond the resources of the family. To be sure, the commercial instincts of some morticians suggest to members of the bereaved family funeral equipment far in excess of their means. It is a time when it is hard to resist the impulse to be generous. But it ought to be remembered that for those whom we love the simplest and least extravagant appointments are the most fitting. It is probably appropriate that gangsters and other unsocial characters should have elaborate funerals. It is all that they can have. But the useful members of society need no such exploitation in death. Their eulogy has been pronounced through a useful life; their monument has been erected in the good that they have wrought. All that the occasion requires is a simple and as far as possible private bestowal of the remains, and a suitable memorial service at a time appropriate.

● *"Please Omit Flowers"*

A word ought to be spoken regarding the use of flowers at funerals. They are a beautiful expression of sympathy at any time. In the homes of the sick, in hospitals where one's friends are receiving treatment, and on other occasions where they may be helpful they are appropriate. But there is a growing feeling that the

extravagant display of flowers at funerals is not only wasteful but not in the best taste. There is a momentary sense of admiration when a mass of flowers is banked about the desk at a funeral, or heaped on the grave at an interment. But the cost of such a display, and the brevity of the use that can be made of it, give disquietude to those who attend, and the increasing number of funeral notices which add the words, "Please omit flowers," is a satisfaction to the community. Other and less costly remembrances may be sent to the family, and the money employed in some cause in which the departed had interest.

● *Progressive Reform in Funeral Customs*

If suggestions were to be made regarding appropriate procedure in the inevitable event of death, it must be acknowledged that funeral customs, like others of long standing, are conservative, and yield but slowly to advancing public sentiment. They are hedged about with precedent, and protected by professional interest. Yet they are subject to progressive change and reform, and no class in the community has as much influence in bringing about departures from the paganism that still invests such procedure as the minister. He has no mandate for change, to be sure. Yet his sentiments are formative in the community, and a few examples may change notably the habits of his people.

When death comes the remains are usually removed by the mortician for such attention as is desired by the family. This may be of the very simplest or it may extend to any form of embalming. If the body is not to be exhibited, little in the way of treatment is needed. It can be placed in a modest casket, and if it is to be interred, can be taken to the cemetery and deposited without publicity, and accompanied by one or two members of the family, or by none, as may seem advisable. One of the most trying experiences of the bereaved may thus be avoided.

● *Where Are the Dead?*

In an increasing number of cases cremation is employed. This would seem to be in every way the preferable method. It is swift, sanitary, economical. The cemetery is a costly, unsanitary and increasingly wasteful method of disposing of human bodies. The "cities of the dead" multiply on all sides of growing communities, and ultimately have to give way to civic improvements. Moreover the tendency to think of a family lot, beautiful as it may be made, as the resting place of one's beloved is morbid and unreal. The dead are not there. They never have been. If a family owns a family lot, the ashes can be interred there as well as a body, or they may be scat-

tered in any other place. And thus quickly and beautifully "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." Half the inhabitants of the earth practice cremation for their dead. It is to be hoped that the other half will adopt this wholesome custom.

● *What About Funeral Sermons?*

The body having been given its fitting and reverent bestowal, it remains for the family and the friends, at some proximate and suitable time, to hold a memorial service for the departed. This should be as simple as possible. It may be held in the home, at the church, or in some other proper place, like a mortuary chapel. There should be as little music as possible, perhaps none. In the case of a well-known and notable member of the community the service will naturally be more elaborate.

Ordinarily the minister should confine his service to the reading of scripture or of some other appropriate literature, and prayer. Funeral sermons are less and less needed. Usually the minister knows less of the deceased than his audience, and any words of eulogy are either unnecessary or out of place. The event itself conveys its own message. It is neither the time to "preach people into heaven" or to lecture the living on their manner of life. A brief service of scripture and prayer

is all that is required, and is usually wholly acceptable to those who may attend.

● *The Minister's Opportunity*

Perhaps a single word might be added in reference to the attendance and participation of members of military, civic or fraternal orders. These are often present and in charge of the services. In some instances their orders of service are appropriate and comforting. But in others the services need to be revised in keeping with modern and proper conceptions of death and the future life. Some of them are wholly outmoded and misleading. A minister in any community can do much to improve not only his own service for the dead, but those of the orders that now and then share the occasion.

It is the desire of every efficient minister of the gospel to bring comfort and admonition to his people and the community to which he ministers. And there is no occasion in which the hearts of the people are more open to a sympathetic and timely message than at the funeral season. To make clear by his use of scripture and his reverent and prayerful utterances the deep meanings of life and death, and to point the way to that eternal life of which the present is the brief prelude, is the happy yet responsible task of the man of God.

America's Making

GOD built him a continent of glory and filled it with treasures untold;

He studded it with sweet flowing fountains and traced it with long winding streams;

He carpeted it with soft rolling prairies and columned it with thunderous mountains;

He graced it with deep shadowed forests and filled them with song,

Then he called unto a thousand peoples and summoned the bravest among them.

They came from the ends of the earth, each bearing a gift and a hope;

The glow of adventure was in their eyes, and in their hearts the glory of hope;

And out of the bounty of earth and the labor of men,

Out of the longing of hearts and prayer of souls,

Out of the memory of ages and the hopes of the world,

God fashioned a nation in love, blessed it with purpose sublime and called it America.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

SINCE 1932 Rev. CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL has ministered to the First Methodist church, south, Birmingham, Ala. Earlier pastorates were in Gatesville, Tex., Oklahoma City, Dallas, Washington, D. C., and Memphis. Dr. Chappell has published many books of sermons which have been widely popular; among these are "Sermons on Bible Characters," "Familiar Failures" and "Sermons from the Psalms."

Rev. FORNEY HUTCHINSON was ordained in 1900, and after serving in three Arkansas pastorates went to St. Luke's Methodist church, south, Oklahoma City, in 1918. After fourteen years there he went to Mt. Vernon Place church in Washington, D. C., where he still ministers. Dr. Hutchinson is a trustee of the Southern Methodist university.

Rev. UMPHREY LEE is widely known as a minister, educator and lecturer. At one time he was director of the Wesley Bible chair in Austin, Tex. He has held pastorates at Cisco and Ennis, Tex., and since 1923 has ministered to the Highland Park Methodist church, south, in Dallas. Dr. Lee is a member of the American Society of Church History and of the Wesley Historical Society. He is also a member of the editorial council of the magazine, "Religion in Life."

An ordained minister since 1904, Rev. ROBERT P. SHULER (Bob Shuler) has become widely known in the field of politics. In 1932 he polled 500,000 votes as a candidate on the prohibition ticket for United States senator, from California. Since 1920 he has been pastor of the Trinity Methodist church, south, Los Angeles. Earlier pastorates were in Virginia, his native state, and in Tennessee and Texas. For a time he edited "The Home and State," Anti-saloon organ published in Texas. He now edits "Bob Shuler's Magazine."

Shortly after his ordination in 1902, Rev. PAUL B. KERN taught for two years at Vanderbilt university in Nashville; then followed a period of pastoral service in Nashville, Bellbuckle and Murfreesboro, Tenn. In 1915 he became professor of ministerial efficiency in Southern Methodist university, Dallas, Tex. He held the post of dean of theology in that school from 1920 to 1926. Returning to the pastorate, he ministered to the Travis Park Methodist church, south, San Antonio, Tex., until 1930, when he was elected bishop and assigned to the Orient. He is now in charge of the Episcopal area embracing North and South Carolina.

Rev. HENRY H. CRANE was ordained in the Methodist ministry in 1916 and has held pastorates at Gorham, Me., Newton, Mass., Malden, Mass., and Scranton, Pa. He has ministered to the Scranton church (Elm Park) since 1928. During the World War Dr. Crane was in Y.M.C.A. secretarial service in England and France.

Born in England, Rev. GEORGE A. BUTTRICK received his academic education at Lancaster Independent college, Manchester, and at Victoria university. He was ordained in the Congregational church, U.S.A., in 1915, and his early pastorates were in Quincy, Ill., and Rutland, Vt. From 1920 to 1927 he ministered to the First Presbyterian church, Buffalo, N. Y., and since 1927 has led the activities of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian church in New York city. The sermon published in this issue was preached at the University of Chicago during the Easter season of this year.

Rev. G. RAY JORDAN is pastor of the Centenary Methodist church, south, in Winston-Salem, N. C.

Rev. HERBERT L. WILLETT is minister of the Kenilworth Union church, in Kenilworth, a suburb of Chicago.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

JOHN KENDRICK BALLOU, First Congregational, Alturas, Cal. "Can Christianity Make Progress Under the Profit-motive Economy?" Matt. 12:29—"How can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?"

MERRILL F. CLARKE, Congregational, New Canaan, Conn. "Thinking Peace After God." Jer. 29:11, 13—"I know the thought that I think toward you, saith the Lord,

thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to let you have hope for the future; pray to me, and I will answer you; seek me, and you shall find me when you seek for me with all your heart." (Moffatt.)

THOMAS TEN HOEVE, New Brooklyn Reformed, Brooklyn, N. Y. "The Challenge to Adventure." Luke 18:22—"Come, follow me."

FREDERICK W. NORWOOD, City Temple, London, Eng. "The Lord of Regrets." Luke 19:42—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

IRA H. FRANTZ, North Manchester, Ind. "The Kingdom—and Bread." Matt. 6:10, 11—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread."

GEORGE A. CLARKE, Brooklyn, N. Y. "The Pioneer." Acts 3:15—"Ye killed the Pioneer of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." (Moffatt.)

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of sermon

Text used (write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

IN his taxation message to Congress, it looks as if President Roosevelt has at last made such a commitment in the direction of radical social policy that he cannot now turn to the right even if he should desire to do so. I put it this way, not because the President's policies from the beginning have

The President's Tax Message

been equivocal or dubious, but because he has been proceeding pragmatically, without announcing any social theory or dogma by which the public could interpret the significance of his successive acts and foretell, in general, his future acts. He has completely disregarded the platform on which he was elected, and appears to be making his platform for 1936 as he goes along. The long curve of his policies has been distinctly toward the left, and his latest message goes farther than any previous commitment. He asks for more drastic taxation on the inheritance of large fortunes, for an increase in the surtax on large incomes, and for a graduated scale of tax rates beginning at 10¾ per cent and running up to 16¾ per cent on the profits of corporations, instead of the present flat rate of 13¾ per cent. The social implications of these proposals are obvious. The President is striking at the unearned and undeserved and unwholesome economic power which descends through inheritance from generation to generation. This, he says, in as great a sentence as he has ever uttered, "is as inconsistent with the ideals of this generation as inherited political power was inconsistent with the ideals of the generation which established our government." I repeat what I have said before: Mr. Roosevelt is giving capitalism its last desperate chance to survive. But if it survives it will be due to the fact that it has become something other than itself.

The Book of the Month

THE FACT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, by P. Carnegie Simpson. Fleming H. Revell Company, \$1.75.

THOSE readers whose memory goes back, as mine does, to the opening years of this century, will recall with something of a thrill a book entitled, "The Fact of Christ," which had a wide circulation and helped many of us to formulate afresh the message of the gospel. That book charged my own preaching with a new vitality. It kept on circulating until after the war. The author of that book, P. Carnegie Simpson, was then pastor of the Renfield church, in Glasgow. Since then he has been for many years professor of church history in Westminster college, Cambridge. In the same spirit as that which informed his first book, he now writes on "The Fact of the Christian Church." It is just as illuminating as the earlier one. As I indicated on this page last month, it is my belief that we have got to begin to do some vigorous and sustained thinking about the church. The sooner we get at it the better. Dr. Simpson opens a way for us to begin. He has a sound method. It is the historical method. He looks at the church as a fact of history. He sees it as the effect of specific causes which are historical in character. Chief

among these causes, and primary to them all, is the fact of Christ. The church took its rise "not through the promulgation of a theological or the propagation of an ecclesiastical system. . . . It took its rise from the impression which Jesus Christ made upon certain of his contemporaries." This was its initial impulse. And this impulse has proved to be permanent. The church has continued as a historical fact "because that first personal impression has never died out . . . but has renewed itself generation after generation." Jesus was not done with history when his thirty years ended. Thus the fact of Christ and the fact of the Christian church are basically one fact.

A Thought for the Month

NOT for a long time has party-consciousness within the Christian church been so near the vanishing point as just now. In saying this, I do not have in mind the fading out of denominational partisanship, though that, thank God, has been reduced to as

The Eclipse of Partisanship

low a point as is humanly possible so long as denominations themselves exist. What I have in mind is the kind of partisanship which lately cut across all denominational boundaries, dividing us into two hostile camps variously labeled Modernists and Fundamentalists, Liberals and Conservatives. I say that the party spirit represented by these labels is at a lower ebb today than it has been for more than a generation. This fact came home to me with peculiar force, recently, in a group of one hundred and fifty church leaders, every one of whom would formerly have been known as a "liberal." During the deliberations two speeches were made which touched the sensibilities of the group with a distinct shock. One was a plea for the adoption of a "conservative" course (in the matter under consideration) so as not to alienate the fundamentalist wing of the churches. The other was a plea that the project in view be launched explicitly in the name of liberalism and make its appeal to liberals as such. Everybody felt that both speakers struck false notes. Reflecting on this general feeling (which I found in informal conversations to be identical with my own), I began to see that there is a new spirit in the church. It is not a spirit of partisanship. It is a spirit of common humility in the presence of a problem which is too great for our small minds. We are all united in a common frustration, a common dimness of vision and a common tentativeness even in our best laid plans. The cocksureness of both conservatism and liberalism has gone. And with it there is vanishing the party-consciousness and intolerance which always accompany the cocksure, closed mind. If we cannot yet have full unity on the basis of positive beliefs, we do seem in a way of getting it on the basis of our common plight! Perhaps that, after all, is what we ought to mean by Christian unity.

Charles Baxter Neuman

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